

# Morph House

## Description

Teacher assists students to build a complete morphological word inventory by beginning with a base word and then collaboratively generating words in that family. For example, the word family for *help* looks like this: *helps, helped, helping, helpful, unhelpful*.

## Purpose

Students at the intermediate level of English proficiency have typically heard some of the words in a given word family. However, they have had little—if any—direct instruction in seeing how the addition of prefixes and suffixes works to build a morphological word family. They also need practice to use each form in complex, academic sentences.

## Key Language Skills

Lexicon, semantics and syntax

## Materials

Chart paper and markers.

## Procedure

1. Teacher or students select a word to begin the family. Note that not all words have morphological families, and that some words have only one or two words in their family. What a relief!
2. Write the starting base word and underline it. Review with students the meaning of the word in that form.
3. If appropriate for the level and preparation of the students, agree on what part of speech the word is.
4. Have students work with a partner to generate as many words as they know (not from a dictionary) that include the base word.
5. Now, elicit from students the words they have generated. Add them below the base word if they are a member of the morphological word family for the base word. Ask students to define each word and, if they can, identify its part of speech.
6. Continue with this process until the complete word family is done. The teacher may need to add missing words.
7. Collaboratively, select a couple of the words and build a sentence that uses the word form correctly.
8. See if students can work in partners, or independently, to craft a sentence using each of the remaining words.

Democracy
1. democrat
2. democrats
3. democratic
4. democratically
5. democratize
6. democratized
7. undemocratic

## Hot Tips

This can be both a challenging and eye-opening strategy—for students and the teacher. Remember, it is critical that students be provided numerous opportunities to review their inventory of words to find forms of the base word that they may already know and use, or that they have merely heard or read without a clear understanding of the meaning. This is a synthesizing strategy that helps English learners bring order to their vocabulary in a way that is critical for academic success. Keep the lists up on the wall so students begin to internalize the concept of “word families”.



## Extensions

### *For Intermediate Students...*

1. Start with words that are common to the students.  
Use words from any of the other “whole star” strategies.
2. Consider building word families for the spelling words students are studying, or from key words from their content books.

### *For Early Advanced and Advanced Students...*

1. Organize the chart by part of speech.

<u>Noun</u>	<u>Verb</u>	<u>Adverb</u>	<u>Adjective</u>
Democracy	democratize	democratically	democratic
Democrat	democratized		undemocratic
Democrats			

2. Have students construct questions using each of the words in the family. Then with a partner, have them answer using the correct word. For example, *Were the early colonists in favor of democracy?* Answer: Yes, *democracy is something the early colonists supported.*